

West Stockbridge Planning Board – Meeting Minutes July 12, 2021
Town Hall & Zoom

Dana called the meeting to order at 7:04 pm. Planning Board members present: Dana Bixby, Chair, Ryan Beattie, Gunner Gudmundson, Andrew Fudge and Sue Coxon (via zoom). Others present: Karen Kavanagh

Approval of the Meeting Minutes

- May 17, 2021 – Dana asked the Board if they had reviewed the minutes. There were no changes. Ryan made a motion to approve the minutes. Andrew seconded. The motion carried 4 to 0. Gunner abstained because he wasn't at that meeting.
- June 7, 2021 – Dana asked the Board if they had reviewed the minutes. Gunner noted two errors. Gunner made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. Sue seconded. The motion carried 4 to 0. Andrew abstained because he wasn't at that meeting.
- June 21, 2021 (Joint Meeting) - Dana asked the Board if they had reviewed the minutes. Gunner made a motion to approve the minutes. Andrew seconded. The motion carried 5 to 0.

Dana said we received an application for a Preliminary Plan for a Subdivision from Hill Engineers on behalf of Wayne Marzotto on Oak Street.

Dana asked for a Motion to schedule a meeting with Hill Engineers for the Marzotta Preliminary Plan on August 9th. Sue made the motion. Gunner seconded. A roll call vote was taken, and approval was unanimous.

Update of Master Plan Steering Committee (MPSC) Activities Surveys:

Dana said the results of the Master Plan Survey will be online and on the website. One item of note is that a majority of the respondents were older, and that majority indicated they want more senior housing and a reasonably strong percentage want affordable housing.

Dana said a new survey related to the Open Space Recreation Plan will be announced on the website and in the Local Yokel. She suggested everyone take the survey when it is available.

Conservation Commission:

Dana said the Master Plan Steering Committee invited John Masiero, Chair of the Conservation Commission to the meeting to get his insight and to ask for the Conservations Commission's help in developing the Open Space Recreation Plan.

She said John has been working on the West Stockbridge Scenic Mountain Act regulations which were adopted by the Select Board but have been languishing at the state level waiting for final approval.

Dana offered John help from the MPSC to do some follow up on the status of the West Stockbridge Scenic Mtn Act.

Review of the Master Plan Document:

Sue and Gunner have reviewed the document and had some issues with margin of error in some of the stats and what the statistics represent. This led to a discussion about what statistics are applicable to the plan. Ryan suggested that as we continue to develop the MP we can pick relevant data to choose.

Dana said the results of the survey have highlighted one of her earlier assumptions that more senior housing and affordable housing would be a desirable policy goal for the Town and one that could generate a consensus in the community, beyond the MPSC and the PB.

Dana said the MPSC meetings in August will be held on the 12th and 26th and that Karen will begin to put together a list of outstanding items (questions and actions) that Phil and the MPSC need to begin addressing

ADU Bylaw Development

Dana said she did not complete the 2nd draft of the ADU bylaws, but it is pending and will get done.

Gunner expressed concerns that the bylaw would allow an ADU to be placed anywhere on a lot, without regard to whether the location would have a negative impact on the view from a neighboring lot.

A lengthy group discussion ensued covering a broad range of concepts that could address concerns about the size of an ADU; the distance from the main house; and how septic and wells could be limiting factors, i.e., the economics of infrastructure could provide a limit on how far an ADU would be from the house.

Dana said this discussion was useful before she tries to do a 2nd draft because she can consider some of these ideas and try to incorporate something that responds to them. Ryan and Andrew offered other ideas for Dana to consider related to as of right conversions of garages to ADUs and some potential loopholes that would have to be closed in the new bylaw.

Short-Term Rentals (STRs)

Dana said that she had reviewed some very useful information about STRs that Karen had collected and shared, which prompted her to research bylaws from other towns. She found some too long or too short, or poorly organized and not clear. She said the Lenox STR bylaw was clearly written, decently organized and she preferred it to anything else she has seen.

Dana shared some of her learnings about the short-term rental process, state and local regs that address registration, taxation, local property management and went on to describe how STR bylaws define "short-term" and the various approaches to limit the cumulative and aggregate number of days a property can be used for short term rentals.

After discussing numerous alternatives to defining and regulating short-term rentals, the Board members agreed to table this item and take it up again at a future meeting. Dana proposed taking a look at the Lenox regs as a starting point for that discussion.

Dana made a motion to adjourn. Andrew seconded. Motion carried 4/0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:57 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Kavanagh, Administrative Assistant